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### Achieving cultural change through organizational justice

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***Achieving cultural change through organizational justice: the case of Stop and Search  
in Scotland***

**By Elizabeth Aston, Kath Murray and Megan O'Neill**

**Abstract**

In recent years, the scale, impact and legality of stop and search in Scotland has been subject to intense critical scrutiny, leading to major legal and policy reform in 2016. Based on these events, including an early unsuccessful attempt by Police Scotland to reform the tactic (the 'Fife Pilot'), this paper presents original theoretical and empirical insights into organizational change in policing. Building on the theoretical perspectives of Chan (1997) and Bradford and Quinton (2014) on organizational culture and justice respectively, the paper set out a dynamic model of organizational justice in policing. While Scotland has seen significant legislative reform apropos stop and search, we conclude that real change in police practice and culture will require effective leadership and a strong commitment to organizational justice. We also suggest how insights from the analysis might be applied to other jurisdictions and policing fields, with a view to securing more citizen-focused, democratic policing.

**Key words**

Stop and search, police culture, cultural change, organizational change, organizational justice

**Introduction**

This article presents an original theoretical framework of organizational change in policing. Using the case of stop and search reform in Scotland, the paper explains how the model can be used to help police forces to achieve more citizen-focused and socially just democratic policing. This refers to policing which is orientated towards respecting the rights of citizens, uses as little force as is necessary, is accountable to governance structures, is open about its methods and its means for redress, and operates in a procedurally fair way (Manning, 2010; Bradford and Quinton, 2014). Tracing the recent stop and search reform journey in Scotland, from an under-regulated and unaccountable tactic, to a closely scrutinised and monitored area of policing, the article examines the complex interplay between organizational reform in policing and organizational culture. The article presents a 'dynamic model of organizational justice' that highlights the importance of leadership and organizational processes, as well as the mechanisms through which cultural change can be achieved

(see further below). We argue that Police Scotland is ideally placed to change the *habitus*, or cultural knowledge, around stop and search through organizationally just policies and change management methods. By the same logic, we also caution that a failure to develop fairer and more consultative leadership approaches means this opportunity may be missed, resulting in marginal or reluctant change, as seen in the early policing response to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry recommendations on stop and search in England and Wales (Loftus, 2009; Shiner, 2010; Souhami, 2014).

#### *Policy background*

In 2013 the centralisation of Scotland's eight police forces under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act<sup>1</sup> brought about a politicisation of policing hitherto unseen in Scotland (Murray and Harkin, 2017). Centralization also coincided with the publication of research evidence that showed recorded stop search rates in Scotland were around four times higher than England and Wales, that most searches were undertaken on a non-statutory 'consensual' basis and that police practice disproportionately targeted young people (Murray 2014). These findings, coupled with intense political and media interest in the new police force, prompted a period of sustained challenge and heated debate that within the space of two years led to major legal and policy reform,

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<sup>1</sup> The 2012 Act established the Police Service of Scotland (PSOS), known as Police Scotland.

including the abolition of non-statutory search and the introduction of a Code of Practice requiring the publication and detailed scrutiny of stop and search data. Police Scotland also retrained every police officer up to and including the rank of Inspector on their use of stop and search. In this way, Scottish policing experienced a clear reconfiguration of the policing *field* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) in relation to stop and search: namely the social space or setting in which police practice is located (see further below). Yet the critical question remains as to whether reform has been accepted by officers and staff as legitimate and/or necessary. In other words, if reform has changed the occupational culture or *habitus* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) that encapsulates officers' individual understandings as to 'how we do things'. This question matters because as documented elsewhere (O'Neill, Marks and Singh, 2007), police occupational cultures can undermine reform efforts if they are not modified sufficiently to view reform as legitimate.

### *Structure and data*

The article is structured as follows. Part one sets out our theoretical framework. Thereafter the main body of empirical narrative and analysis is presented chronologically. Part two overviews the initial stop and search controversy. Next, part three examines the 'Fife Pilot', an initiative introduced by Police Scotland in early 2015

in response to the unfolding stop and search controversy. While the pilot introduced some elements of good practice, it neither addressed the key issues – targeting young people, use of non-statutory tactics and recording errors (O’Neill and Aston, 2018), nor changed the policing field. Part four outlines events following the Fife Pilot, and shows how major reform was secured principally via external pressure. The discussion in part five presents original insights into the pilot (why this was unsuccessful), discusses why change happened, and unpacks the relationship between police reform and occupational culture. Drawing the findings and analysis together, the concluding section reflects on what is needed to bring about a shift in occupational culture, what lessons can be learned from the stop and search journey in Scotland, and how these lessons might be applied to similar challenges in other jurisdictions, as well as other areas of police practice, to achieve democratic policing. The analysis draws on primary data collected as part of a commissioned mixed-method evaluation of the Fife Pilot (detailed further in part three) (O’Neill, Aston and Krause, 2015), and a range of secondary sources, including media reports, policy reports and additional academic evidence on stop and search practice and reform in Scotland.

## **1. Theoretical framework**

Our theoretical framework builds on two previous studies: Chan's seminal work on police culture (1997), and Bradford and Quinton's (2014) research on organizational justice (also see Myhill and Bradford, 2013; Bradford et al., 2013). While both make important individual contributions to understanding organizational change in policing, we argue that a synthesis model – a dynamic model for organizational justice - can provide further insights into the change process that accounts for a) the role of supervisors and police leaders in developing and shaping police cultures, and b) the interactive cultural processes through which officers adapt their practices to change. Each text is outlined below, followed by our own model.

Chan's *Changing Police Culture* (1997) examines a failed attempt at addressing institutionalised racism in the New South Wales Police Service, based on the findings of a detailed questionnaire of over 300 officers (O'Neill, 2016). Chan argues that much of the preceding literature on the formation of police culture and its influence on police practice took a rigid and linear approach. These texts, she suggests, present the historical social and political forces involved in policing as directly shaping police culture, the latter of which was usually presented as static and monolithic, and passively incorporated into police practice. Using a synthesis of the works of Bourdieu (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), Sackmann (1991), Schein (1985) and Shearing and Ericson (1991), Chan instead argues for a more fluid, non-linear and interactive model

that is neither non-deterministic nor unidirectional. Putting police actors at the centre of a dynamic process, Chan's model includes both 'field' and 'habitus'. The field refers to 'a set of objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital)' (Wacquant, 1992: 16). For policing, this includes elements such as the police organization and its leadership, key political actors, historical events in policing, the wider socio-economic conditions in which the police work, and media scrutiny. These conditions influence police actors and practice, along with officers' own cultural knowledge or *habitus* (see further below) and experiences. Police actors also influence all three elements: field, habitus and police practice. Viewed in this way, police culture is not a set of 'rules' that exist separately from the conditions of policing, but is routinely shaped by, and shapes these conditions.

For Chan (1997), the habitus, or officers' cultural knowledge, is comprised of four elements: axiomatic knowledge, dictionary knowledge, directory knowledge and recipe knowledge. Axiomatic knowledge refers to the police mandate, or what officers consider to be their core tasks (i.e. 'real' policing). Dictionary knowledge encompasses the categories that police officers use to make sense of the world around them and the people in it, for instance, what is viewed as an abnormal situation or a suspicious character. Directory knowledge indicates to officers what to do when they are in a



situation where police action is seen to be required. Recipe knowledge refers to police values, and indicates what an officer should or should not do in particular situations, such as supporting fellow officers who are under scrutiny, or not over-performing so that colleagues look bad in comparison. Chan (1997) argues that a significant change in the policing field will not alter the cultural knowledge of officers unless all four elements are also changed. Even then, a change in police practice is not guaranteed, as it depends on how police actors interpret the developments in their field and their habitus.

Bradford and Quinton's (2014) analysis of police occupational culture and practice from an *organizational justice* perspective – the second element of our theoretical framework – provides some insight as to why this may be. Building on an established body of literature on organizational justice (see Colquitt et al., 2001), Bradford and Quinton use data from a survey of officers serving in Durham Constabulary to examine the extent to which the organization was seen by its officers and staff to have fair procedures, operate in an open and transparent way, have consistent decision-making, respectful personal interactions and employ two-way communication methods. Their analysis suggests that organizations that operate with these methods will encourage *organizational identity* among its officers and staff. That is, officers will have a strong

identification with their police force and will be more committed to working in line with formal policy and procedure. Officers with a strong sense of organizational identity are more likely to have pride in their organization and view its internal mechanisms and structures as legitimate. Organizational identity also promotes *self-legitimacy* among police officers. Specifically, members of police forces who feel supported by, and belong to their organizations are more likely to have a greater sense of self-worth and confidence in their ability to address challenging situations. Crucially, self-legitimacy also encourages a sense of commitment towards socially just *police practice*: officers with a strong sense of self-legitimacy are more likely to use force as a last resort, to be calm and assured, and allow members of the public to have their say during encounters.

Bradford and Quinton's (2014) work brings together the three elements that influence police actors in Chan's model (1997) – *field* (in relation to organizationally just management and leadership), *habitus* (in relation to organizational identity and self-legitimacy); and *police practice* – and puts additional emphasis on the role of leadership and internal organizational processes. For Chan (1997) change in the field is needed to initiate reciprocal change in the habitus, as field and habitus exist in a state of interaction with each other. Bringing together these models recognises the

interactive cultural processes involved in securing organizational justice, as well as the role of leadership, and produces a fuller picture of how to achieve more citizen-focused democratic policing (Manning 2010). This dynamic model for organizational justice is shown in the diagram below:

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

The remainder of the paper analyses the stop and search reform project in Scotland, using this theoretical lens. The discussion suggests that the factors identified above are critical to this reform process, with signs of success in some, but not in all. The paper concludes with an examination of how this theoretical framework can be utilized to build democratic policing practice through organizational justice more widely.

## **2. Stop and search in Scotland: early changes to the policing field**

The amalgamation of Scotland's eight police forces in 2013 abruptly politicized Scottish policing, subjecting the new service to an unprecedented degree of media scrutiny (Murray and Harkin, 2017). The stop and search controversy was sparked in early 2014 by a research report that revealed for the first time the recorded scale of police practice (around four times higher than England and Wales), the extensive use of non-statutory tactics (searching without legal authority or reasonable suspicion), the

disproportionate targeting of children and young people, and lack of accountability (Murray, 2014). Published in the turbulent first year of Police Scotland, the research was met with an exceptionally hostile response from Police Scotland and the Scottish Government, prompting organized efforts to undermine and close down the findings (Murray, 2017). Of relevance here is that these failed, in part due to the shifting policing *field*: to external forces that for the first time, exposed Scottish policing to intense critical scrutiny. In this way, stop and search gained traction, both as a scandal in its own right and a signifier for the apparent flaws of the new police force, including a perceived loss of localism and discretion, and the expansion of enforcement tactics.

In May 2014 the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) published its own review of stop and search, and a set of recommendations. Although a relatively mild assessment, it was nonetheless clear ‘something needed to be done’, if only to repair the reputational damage inflicted thus far (Murray, 2017). Changes implemented by Police Scotland at this stage included the establishment of a National Stop and Search Unit (NSSU), and a six-month pilot in Fife Division, aimed at improving police accountability, data quality and public confidence in the tactic, as detailed next.

### **3. The Fife pilot: an unsuccessful effort at organizational change**

Police Scotland selected 'P' Division, the Fife area of Scotland, as the site for its pilot which was launched in July 2014. An independent academic evaluation, commissioned to review the effectiveness of the pilot, commenced in September 2014. Data collection took place between November 2014 and February 2015, and the final report was published in June 2015 (O'Neill, Aston and Krause, 2015). The mixed-method evaluation involved collecting primary qualitative data from observations and interviews, analysing existing policy documentation and a limited analysis of stop and search datasets. Overall, thirty-seven Interviews were conducted with police officers across a range of ranks, staff and members of the public.<sup>2</sup> Extended visits took place at divisional headquarters and two local police stations, which involved observation of meetings, assessment of processes introduced and observations of front line officers on normal patrol duties. During data collection, 11 instances of stop and search involving 19 people were directly observed. NVivo software was used to aid storage and retrieval of qualitative data and the analysis adopted both a deductive approach to looking at the mechanisms introduced and a more inductive approach to exploring meaning construction.

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<sup>2</sup> Interviews were held with senior police officers (n=4), management officers (n=5), police constables (n=12), police staff (n=3), local partners (n=3) and members of the public who had been stopped and searched (n=10). The identity of research participants has been anonymised and they will be referred to by role and number (e.g. Senior Officer 1, Management Officer 2, Police Constable 1, etc).

The evaluation aimed to assess the process of introducing and implementing new methods for stop and search in Fife, and ascertain the extent to which the ambitious pilot objectives had been achieved, namely: 'improving the data on which stop and search is based'; 'improving accountability'; and 'improving confidence in the use of stop and search'. Yet in practice, the objectives were unrealistic, and could not be achieved and measured in a stated timeframe, nor properly evaluated. In other words, they were not SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound (Pickton 2013). To be clear, some of the changes led to improvements in practice – including the systematic recording of all stop searches, officer compliance recording checks, engagement with external stakeholders, issuing advice slips to the public and the use of aide memoires for officers (O'Neill and Aston, 2018). Nonetheless, the evaluation showed the pilot did not go far enough to bring about the change required to the fundamental issues: non-statutory search remained, as did disproportionate searches of young people. In this way, the pilot ultimately amounted to marginal rather than meaningful organizational change. This is in keeping with existing literature which suggests that in times of challenge, police forces and officers tend to resist calls for reform (Chan 1997, O'Neill et al 2007, Loftus 2009). As detailed next, in key respects the pilot appeared presentational: an attempt by Police Scotland to

demonstrate that they were taking the concerns issue seriously, but lacking in commitment to genuine change. For example, one respondent emphasised that stop and search continued to be seen as a key operational tactic by Police Scotland and its leadership:

*Chief Constable Sir Steven House who, from the outset, made a decision that we are evaluating Stop and search in terms of our use of it, in terms of the processes that we use but we're not evaluating it as a tactic. So very clearly from the top level, he makes it clear that stop and search will not go away, it's a tactic that helps the public and will continue to be used. (Management Officer 1)*

Relatedly, senior police officers and management officers agreed that the pilot was intended to be as non-invasive as possible apropos the day-to-day duties of police officers on the beat:

*I don't think it's...been a culture change. This is – what we've been trying to do certainly in my area is make it business as usual – Right? (Senior Officer 2).*

*...with the pilot I think, as I said before, it's just a case of actually putting it on the system and having a greater awareness.... we're still doing what we did*

*before but we're just doing it better, as in we're keeping a better log of it.*

(Police Constable 2)

Set against an ongoing operational commitment to the tactic, it is unsurprising that officers' cultural knowledge did not change apropos their axiomatic knowledge as to what they perceived to be their mandate. With a lack of commitment to wholesale and meaningful organizational change, officers questioned the need for change and expressed uncertainty as to the basis of the pilot. Police interviewees also emphasised that the pilot had resulted principally from external political and media criticism:

*It became a political hot potato and, as a result of that, we've had to kinda demonstrate that we're being fair to everybody and we're doing it for the right purposes.* (Management Officer 2)

Similarly, some senior police officers and police staff questioned whether members of the public were really concerned over police practices, and suggested that exaggerated claims had been made about the scale of the problem:

*The circumstances [leading to the pilot] were purely political and media pressure. There had been a lot of political comment, mainly from the key members that sit on the Justice Committee...So all this political kinda comment and debate then led to the media picking up on it and the media started*



*reporting it...And again it was kinda coupled with the apparent dramatic rise in figures...It's because our reporting mechanisms previously weren't good enough, whereas they are now and that's why it's seen as that dramatic increase where it's actually in real terms not as much. (Management Officer 1)*

*...there's very few issues amongst the community, the public, around stop and search and it has been very politically driven and I think it depends again on what political party you're sitting on as to who is being more critical about it as a tactic. (Senior Officer 2)*

While a few senior police interviewees viewed the external pressure as valid, the overall perception was that 'the public' had not requested change, and therefore the need for reform was not legitimate or necessary. The evaluation also showed that police officers had limited knowledge of the pilot aims, many could not even recall the training they received about it and that two-way communication (allowing officer input) was not embedded. With regards to axiomatic knowledge or mandate, some officers mistook the pilot aims as oriented towards violent crime reduction and enhancing prevention:

*It's the prevention of crime is kinda the key factor. If we can stop these folk and deal with them before an incident actually takes place, I think that's the main objective, and then you've got things like public perception... when they actually see us doing the stop and search, they'll see us to be actively trying to lower crime in our area. (Police Constable 1)*

Indeed, it appeared that the pilot resulted in a perceived pressure on police officers to increase their use of the tactic:<sup>3</sup>

*Every day, stop and search is getting pushed, so of course you want to make sure, especially as a probationer, that you're making sure you're meeting –you know, there's not numbers and specific targets, however, as part of your course of duty, it is expected of you that you are gonna go out and stop search and deter crime, especially as a probationer, It's important to show that you're being proactive in your approach to policing. (Police Officer 2)*

While there was a perception among some senior officers that the approach to stop and search had become more intelligence driven over recent years, many officers did

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<sup>3</sup> While there are limitations to the quantitative stop and search data available at the time of the pilot, the existing data supported officers' claims that the use of stop and search increased during the pilot period.

not perceive a significant change during the pilot in terms of enhanced targeting. Intelligence about specific people formed part of daily briefings irrespective of the pilot, while analytical products were shared with Sergeants, rather than officers tasked with frontline decision-making. More broadly, primacy was given to experiential knowledge:

*It's nice to have a map but the intelligence sits in the officers that are working on the street and it comes from where they are and the calls they go to and their local knowledge. (Senior Officer 3)*

This suggests that officers' directory knowledge had not changed and they were still very reliant on their existing dictionary knowledge and categorisations. This was supported by findings from participants who were known offenders and who had been stopped and searched repeatedly: 'But the bottom line is, ken, they stopped and they searched me because of who I am' (Member of the public 7). It also does not appear that the pilot resulted in any fundamental change to recipe knowledge, with some participants complaining about the random and unjustified nature of searches, or saying they felt embarrassed being searched in public.

While recommendations from the evaluation did improve policy and practice in the long run<sup>4</sup>, it can be argued that the Fife pilot failed to change officers' cultural knowledge or *habitus* (Chan, 1997), despite ongoing changes in the wider policing *field*. Police managers were themselves unconvinced by the need for reform, nor was the change implemented in a consultative way, thus precluding two-way communication or fair internal procedures. Without clear senior support, officers were unable to see the pilot as just and fair, or to build it into their occupational identity (Bradford and Quinton 2014). Nor did the Fife pilot change the police mandate or 'axiomatic knowledge' (Chan, 1997). For example, quantitative data reports intended to direct officers to search the 'right people, at the right time and in the right place' had limited influence on frontline decision-making, which continued to draw on prior experiential knowledge. In this respect, it there was little or no change to the *habitus* (cultural knowledge) in terms of 'dictionary knowledge', 'directory knowledge' or 'recipe knowledge' (Chan, 1997). Overall, despite the considerable time, effort and cost, the Fife pilot did not fundamentally change stop and search practice or culture.

#### **4. Ongoing changes in the field**

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<sup>4</sup> See the Police Scotland response to the evaluation recommendations:  
<http://www.scotland.police.uk/assets/pdf/138327/306184/416786/SIPR-Report-Response?view=Standard>

As the Fife pilot evaluation concluded, the controversy around stop and search intensified, prompting further changes to the power dynamics within the policing field. In February 2015, the BBC (Ellison, 2015) reported that despite a pledge to stop non-statutory searches of children under twelve years, the tactic was still being used, albeit in a much-reduced capacity. When questioned in the Scottish Parliament, a chief officer also revealed that 20,000 records had been corrupted due to a member of staff 'pushing the wrong button' (BBC, 2015a) prompting further parliamentary criticism. The impetus for major reform intensified in March 2015 when Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS, 2015) published a highly critical report calling for a general presumption against non-statutory search and stating that they had no confidence in the stop and search data (BBC, 2015b). At this point, the Scottish Government appointed an Independent Advisory Group (IAG), led by human rights lawyer John Scott QC, to review police practice, draft a Code of Practice on stop and search, and make recommendations to Ministers. In June 2015 the Fife pilot evaluation report recommended an end to non-statutory search and complete redevelopment of the national data base, thereby adding further pressure (O'Neill, Aston and Krause, 2015). The following month, the United Nations Human Rights Committee advised the Scottish Government to 'repeal' non-statutory search (UNCRC 2015: 5). In September 2015 the IAG report cemented the case for reform,

recommending an end to non-statutory search, together with a range of robust accountability mechanisms (Scott, 2015). Ending the period of defensiveness, the Scottish Government and Police Scotland accepted the IAG recommendations in full (BBC, 2015c) and the Scottish Government tabled amendments to the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill to bring these into effect. Passed in December 2015, the Act put stop and search on a statutory basis, and provided for a statutory Code of Practice which came into force in May 2017.

## **5. Discussion**

Since 2015, there has been a pronounced shift in the Scottish policing field in relation to stop and search. Many of the elements that Chan (1997) identifies as necessary for meaningful cultural change are now present. There has been external pressure from the media, the Scottish Parliament and oversight bodies. Both the Scottish Government and Police Scotland have accepted the need for change, resulting in significant policy and legal reform. Recorded stop search data are now published on a quarterly basis, the NSSU currently scrutinises all recorded searches for compliance with the Code of Practice<sup>5</sup>, recorded search rates have fallen, performance management targets have ended, and the force has retrained all operational officers.

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<sup>5</sup> The NSSU's 100% audit of stop and search records will eventually be devolved to the local level and will involve only a sampling of records.

There is also a greater willingness to consult with researchers, for example in the development of training.

While these developments are significant in relation to the policing field, they do not, by default, change the policing *habitus*. This is where Bradford and Quinton's (2014) work is significant and when integrated with Chan's (1997) framework, allows for a fuller understanding of the organizational dynamics in relation to police culture. While officers may understand the need for change and what they are being asked to do, if perceived as imposed by senior management or enforced from the outside (for example, by Members of the Scottish Parliament) then change is unlikely to be viewed as fair and just, and officers will struggle to adopt it into their practice in any meaningful way.

In this instance, the recent prioritisation of volume stop and search<sup>6</sup> exacerbated the challenge apropos organizational change further. As an evaluation of police reform explained (SIPR et al. 2016: 26), Police Scotland was broadly perceived as "weighted towards the culture within legacy<sup>7</sup> Strathclyde Police, characterised by performance

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<sup>6</sup> Volume stop and search was promoted in Police Scotland and some of the former forces, notably in Strathclyde Police. in 2012/13 the legacy Strathclyde Executive tasked officers with undertaking nearly half a million stop searches, which equated to a fifth of the police force population (Strathclyde Police Authority, 2012: 2).

<sup>7</sup> 'Legacy forces' refers to the eight forces that preceded Police Scotland: Strathclyde; Lothian and Borders; Dumfries and Galloway; Central; Tayside; Northern; Fife and Grampian.

targets and a management style initially focused on tight central ‘grip’”. As a policy that originated in legacy Strathclyde under then Strathclyde Chief Constable Sir Stephen House, this approach – dubbed ‘Strathclydisation’ in the media – was epitomised by the national roll-out of volume stop and search in the first year of Police Scotland. As such, the emphasis on softer policing approaches, engagement and child welfare from circa mid-2015 onwards represented a wholesale change in policy direction for the organization.

While some officers adapted to the reforms and altered their habitus accordingly, for critics of reform the abolition of non-statutory search, as well as new recording standards and requirement to provide a receipt to persons searched were viewed as a self-inflicted bureaucratic burden. For example, the Scottish Police Federation argued that reform would ‘neuter’ officers, and that officers should be allowed to search on a ‘hunch’ (Marshall, 2017). Taking an overview, reform was implemented in an organization that remained divided as why to change had arisen in the first place, and what best policing practice should actually look like.

Stop and search reform in England and Wales also provides insights into the challenges associated with securing organizational change. As researchers have observed, the introduction of new policies following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (Macpherson,



1999) did not result in a change in officers' habitus (Foster, Newburn and Souhami, 2005; Shiner, 2010; Souhami, 2014). Rather, as Shiner notes, the requirement to make a record of all stops (recommendation 61) 'was widely resented by officers who considered it part of an "attack" on the police service spearheaded by allegations of institutional racism'. Thus, '[e]ven before it came into force the requirement that all stops be recorded had been distorted by a series of defence mechanisms and allied patterns of resistance which distanced the implementation process from the intended purpose of promoting accountability' (2010: 950). The net result was that concerns about due process and accountability were eclipsed by an entrenched orientation towards crime control (Reiner, 2010) and an overriding resistance to imposed bureaucracy.

Shiner concludes that this type of defensive reaction should be anticipated when planning reform and states '[o]ne of the ways this might be done is through restorative forums in which police officers are given the opportunity to experience the harmful consequence of their actions in ways that are difficult for them to neutralize' (2010: 950).

Our dynamic model of organizational justice suggests that leaders and managers at *all* levels need to bring in change in an open and consultative way for officers to willingly

adopt new methods and procedures, and change their cultural knowledge accordingly (axiomatic and directory knowledge in particular). For example, there should be clear lines of communication and mechanisms that allow staff to articulate their views on new arrangements. Encouragingly, Police Scotland incorporated opportunities<sup>8</sup> for discussion in its revised stop and search training, which allowed officers to express any reservations or doubts. This matters because as Rosenbaum and McCarty (2017) explain, ‘buy-in’ to reforms and police compliance with rules is much more likely when supervisors and leaders are fair, respectful, give officers input, provide growth opportunities and show concern for officers’ welfare. We would however argue this two-way approach is required across all policy areas to properly secure the benefits of organizational justice principles. The salience of this argument is reinforced by the 2015 Police Scotland staff survey, which found that a third of officers were considering leaving the force, and that only eight percent thought the organization was interested in officer wellbeing. Added to this, only nine percent of officers thought that the survey results would lead to change (Leask, 2015). In sum, while the *field* of policing in Scotland has significantly changed in relation to stop and search, Police Scotland needs to operate internally in an *organizationally just* way so that officers are more likely to

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<sup>8</sup> Although whether or not this opportunity is used and to what extent is dependent on the trainer in question.

identify with the organization and its rules. Officers are then more likely to adjust all four aspects of their *habitus*, have more faith in their ability to adopt new methods and procedures for stop and search, feel a stronger sense of self-legitimacy, and alter their practice towards more citizen-focused democratic policing.<sup>9</sup>

## Conclusion

Using evidence and analysis from the stop and search reform journey in Scotland, this article has put forward a dynamic model of organizational justice that incorporates wider events in the policing field, how officers interpret these events, and, crucially, the role of leadership and management in facilitating change. Building on the work of Chan (1997) and Bradford and Quinton (2014), the model identifies elements of organizational change that need to be achieved to facilitate meaningful cultural change and to bring about more citizen-focused, democratic policing. Drawing on organizational literature, this section concludes with some further reflections on what is needed to bring about a shift in officers' *habitus*, what lessons can be learned from the stop and search reform in Scotland, and how these lessons might be applied to similar changes in other jurisdictions, as well as other areas of policing.

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<sup>9</sup> Police Scotland launched an initiative, 'Your Wellbeing Matters' in September 2017 which brings in a number of services to support officers and staff, including 200 'wellbeing champions' (Scottish Parliament 2018). The impact of these are yet to be assessed.

Alongside the changes to stop and search discussed herein, other shifts in the Scottish policing field have provided further challenges, as well as opportunities to change officers' habitus and practices. It is clear that officers in Scotland have experienced major upheaval as a result of centralisation (Fyfe et al., 2018). For the most part, and contrary to key organizational justice principles, the reform process was 'top down' insofar as officers were not consulted and communication was one-way (Hail, 2016; Fyfe et al., 2018). Following the departure of Chief Constable Sir Stephen House in 2015, the Police Scotland Executive explicitly signalled a shift in the policing field, purposefully moving away from its hitherto enforcement-based performance management culture. While changes in leadership may have helped facilitate this change in direction, it is not a guarantee of revised practice, particularly among officers who learned their craft at a time that prioritised enforcement tactics. This cohort, along with officers from the legacy-Strathclyde area, may retain an axiomatic knowledge that considers volume stop and search and other quantifiable policing methods to be important tactics of 'real policing'. Although the strategic orientation away from performance management (and greater willingness to engage with outside organizations) is positive, there also needs to be openness and engagement between senior officers and rank and file officers. This matters because there is a strong

association between officers' perceptions of senior leadership and their own organizational identity. This in turn is associated with self-legitimacy and more procedurally just, rights-based policing (Bradford and Quinton, 2014). The case for workforce engagement is also powerfully put by Sklansky and Marks, namely that it 'heightens morale and commitment...develops democratic skills and habits [and] makes for better decisions' (2008; 3).

Our dynamic model of organizational justice points towards how real changes in police practice can be achieved. Chan (1997) argues that the cultural knowledge of officers will not alter unless all four elements of the habitus are also changed. This involves first, changing officer understandings as to what is 'real policing' or 'axiomatic knowledge'. In the case of stop and search reform, the aim is to move away from enforcement and towards engagement, build meaningful police-community relations, and enable robust co-production with public sector partner agencies. Encouragingly, Police Scotland's ten-year strategy *Policing 2026* prioritises local engagement and partnership working (Police Scotland, 2017a). However for this change in strategic orientation to influence the axiomatic knowledge of officers, there also needs to be appropriate resourcing, internal encouragement, opportunity, and reward for doing so from managers (Bradford and Quinton, 2014). In relation to 'dictionary knowledge'

(which refers to knowledge about how to interpret any policing situation) a core part of the new stop and search training is aimed at understanding why young people may react to police officers defensively, and how to engage with them without recourse to search. This approach to a population that was, for some officers, routinely viewed as the 'usual suspects' (McAra and McVie, 2005) may take time to gain traction and will need to be appropriately reinforced by line managers. Third, there is 'directory knowledge' which refers to how routine operational policing is carried out. As detailed above, there have been major changes to legislation and policy in relation to the requirement for reasonable suspicion, however previous directory knowledge is likely to be ingrained and will be difficult to alter. While overall rates of stop and search fell by 64% between June 2015 and December 2016 (Police Scotland, 2017b), this may well reflect caution in terms of the new procedures, as well as wariness, rather than a full commitment to the new approach. Ongoing opportunities for voicing concerns or questions about the Code of Practice will also be important for achieving long-term officer 'buy-in' (Rosenbaum and McCarty, 2017; Bradford and Quinton, 2014). Finally, in relation to 'recipe knowledge', which refers to more informal values and internal normative expectations for police officer behaviour, the Code of Ethics for policing in Scotland (Police Scotland, 2016) provides a principled basis: the challenge is embedding these principles into practice. Recipe knowledge is not easily altered by the

efforts of management or senior leaders, but may nonetheless shift over time, in response to changes in the other three types of cultural knowledge. Continued opportunities for two-way communication with staff and fair management practices will also be of importance. It is these factors, taken together in our dynamic model, that are likely to increase organizational identity, enhance self-legitimacy and encourage officers to commit to stop and search reform, as well as a more socially just and democratic way of policing.

Lessons from the story of changing stop and search in Scotland are also relevant to policing in other jurisdictions and police reform more widely. In this respect, our analysis and our dynamic model have implications for general policing theory. Deficits in accountability and oversight of stop and search exist in many countries. As Bowling and Marks observe, there is 'inconsistency in global recording practices and [a] lack of oversight of police, border controls and private actors' (2015: 192). Such deficits may undermine public confidence and trust, and raise questions as to whether the tactic is used discriminately. As such, the findings in this article may be applicable to other jurisdictions in relation to bringing about changes in police search practice and culture. The theoretical framework developed here suggests that fundamental change in policing practice is unlikely without corresponding change in the policing field,

supported by changes in officers' habitus. The policing field includes organizationally just leadership and management practices, as well as issues of policing governance, media pressure, accountability bodies, political contexts, legislation, policy development, training and findings from research. As Topping and Bradford argue in relation to the recorded rates of stop and search in Northern Ireland: 'Breaking PSNI's dependence on its stop and search 'habit', as partially – and contingently – achieved elsewhere in the U.K (Travis, 2014) will require not just additional technical scrutiny but also wider political and policy leverage' (2018: 21). If change is secured in the policing field, then there is scope for longer-term change in habitus and practice. While changes to police practice can be mandated (for example through legislation or internal policy) without meaningful support from the field and the habitus, or fair management practices, it is unlikely to last, or will be superficial at best. Put another way, achieving fair and democratic policing is a long-term endeavour that is unlikely to be secured through minor and/or isolated alterations to police work. For policing jurisdictions that have not experienced external pressures (such as that seen in Scotland) it is even more crucial that police leaders and management practices adopt fair and organizationally just methods (that are cognizant of the relationship between field and habitus) to justify and support change. This argument is also underscored by the 'invisibility' of tactics such as stop and search, which as Topping and Bradford note,



despite regulatory frameworks 'is an elusive power, hard to pin down within established regulatory and accountability structures' (2018: 21). Reform is still an active project in Scotland, as a power of search for alcohol remains under consideration, which arguably runs counter to the current emphasis on engagement. While the use and efficacy of stop and search remains a live and often contested issue, there is some scope for optimism. Research undertaken in Durham Constabulary (Bradford and Quinton 2014, Bradford et al 2014) suggests socially just policing can be achieved.

It is also important to acknowledge that the theoretical framework presented herein has limitations. The model does not include the role of the public in the policing field, which could plausibly play a role in enabling cultural change. The framework could also be extended to consider the role of reflexive practitioners in more detail, given that change is likely to be more effective if it comes from within the organization.

The data presented in the article is also limited in scope to one Police Scotland Division. While restrictions on time and data integrity precluded detailed quantitative analysis, the extensive qualitative data (interviews, observations and document analysis) provided researchers with a deeper understanding of how officers experienced the pilot and the effects, if any, on practice.

Having drilled beneath the pilot as it was officially represented, to the complex interplay between organizational change and police culture, we would argue that police organizations are better placed to reform practice and policy if they listen to their staff, invest in training, encourage officers to be reflexive practitioners, embed a research culture and make evidence-informed decisions. Implementing change in an organizationally just way, with support from policing leaders and managers, should encourage officers to reflect on their experiences, positively shape their habitus (Chan, 1997), foster progressive organizational identities in officers (Bradford and Quinton, 2014) and ultimately help to secure more citizen-focused and socially just democratic policing.

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Figure 1:



Figure 1: A dynamic model of organizational justice in policing